

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 – 3 and 7 - 17 are currently pending in this application, as amended. By the present amendment, claims 1, 7, 13 and 17 have been amended, and claims 4 – 6 have been canceled. Applicants submit that no new matter has been introduced into the application by these amendments.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

In the Action, claims 6, 7 and 17 were only objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, and were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 4, 5 and 6, which have been canceled, and should therefore be allowable as corresponding to claim 6 rewritten in independent form. Additionally, claim 17 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 1 and 4 from which it depended, and should now also be allowable.

The remaining claims depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, and should also be in condition for allowance. It is noted that claim 7 was amended to change the dependency to claim 1, and claim 13 was amended to correct the antecedents for an element now in claim 1.

In view of these amendments to accept the allowable claims, claims 1 – 3 and 7 – 17 should now all be in condition for allowance.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103

Claims 1 - 5 and 8 - 16, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) or 35 U.S.C. §103 for the reasons noted in detail in the Action. Applicants do not necessarily agree with these rejections; however, in order to obtain prompt allowance of the present application, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 6,

which was indicated as including allowable subject matter, and claim 17 has also been rewritten in independent form, as noted above. In view of the present amendments, these substantive rejections have been rendered moot, and should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

If the Examiner believes that any additional minor formal matters need to be addressed in order to place the present application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience, so that any such matters can be addressed.

In view of the foregoing Amendments and Remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application, including claims 1 – 3 and 7 -17 is in condition for allowance, and a Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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